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Nossenko Case Impact Measured COPYRIGHT

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Washington

Because Yuri I. Nossenko defected from the Soviet Union smack in the middle of the Geneva disarmament conference, does this spoil the negotiating atmosphere?

United States officials are not disturbed by the press conference charge of the chief Soviet delegate, Semyon K. Tsarapkin, that the Swiss "allowed" Mr. Nossenko to escape. United States officials expect the negotiations to go ahead about as before.

The carefully staged Tsarapkin performance is seen as a clumsy propagandistic device for covering up the Soviet embarrassment. The Tsarapkin charge incensed the Swiss. Mr. Tsarapkin was careful not to drag the United States into the act.

In an earlier East-West atmosphere of regular propagandistic explosions the Soviets would have directly charged the United States with enticing Mr. Nossenko into the West.

However, the Tsarapkin reaction in Geneva underlines how acutely sensitive all nations are about their undercover operations.

Immediate Disclosure

What seems much more significant about the aftermath of

the Nossenko episode to observers is that the United States decided to react immediately that Mr. Tsarapkin had "crossed over."

Such defections, however, are not revealed for years if at all.

This immediate announcement places the defection into the domestic and international political atmosphere.

At home, the revelation makes it possible for the Johnson administration to "point to pride" to its at-times criticized intelligence service, indicating that they are doing their job creditably.

Overseas, Mr. Nossenko's disappearance from Geneva damages the Communist world's image in the East-West confrontation, implying dissatisfaction with the Communist way of life.

People are often titillated by such "romantic" spy stories. They are reminded how little they know about the world of espionage and counterespionage.

Meanwhile Mr. Nossenko is esconced in a hideaway with American agents while he is "debriefed." Every cranny and corner of his experience will be reviewed and weighed.

But as this goes on, American intelligence operatives realize that the Nossenko defection is a "break" of the sort

that can't be depended on very often.

A national intelligence program evaluation group under John A. Bross of the Central Intelligence Agency, has existed since last summer to run a continuing review of the United States intelligence operation.

Mr. Bross is a deputy to CIA Director John A. McCone and works along with Frederick E. Nolting Jr., former Ambassa-

dor to South Vietnam and a foreign service officer, and Maj. Gen. John M. Reynolds of the Air Force.

Their work is not to "investigate" but to tackle serious intelligence problems, taking as much as three months or more to solve them.

This group is looking for serious intelligence gaps, although officials ruefully admit that such gaps often turn up too late for remedial action.